REMARKS

By the present amendment, claims 2 and 3 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer thereby rendering moot the Examiner's objection to claim 3. A divisional application relating to the withdrawn subject matter has been filed on December 5, 2003, and applicants will pursue such non-elected subject matter in that application. The cancellation of claims 2 and 3 leaves claims 4 and 5 in the present application. Claim 4 defines the same subject matter as former claim 3 and depends from independent claim 5 so that these two claims should be under consideration in the present application.

Claim 5 recites a lithographic printing plate precursor comprising a support having a hydrophilic surface having provided thereon an image-forming layer containing a hydrophobic high molecular compound having at least either a functional group represented by defined formula (1) or a functional group represented by defined formula (2), each of which includes a X group which represents an iodonium ion, a sulfonium ion or a diazonium ion represented by defined formula (7). From the definition of formula (7), it will be recognized that while various different groups may be present, the groups do not include a resin. This understanding is buttressed by the illustrative diazonium groups provided in the last three lines of page 25 of the specification which are relatively low molecular weight groups and by the illustrative overall compounds set forth on pages 43-46 and compounds (3), (6), (13) and (16) in particular. By using the present invention, the advantages summarized on page 224 of the specification and illustrated in various of the application examples can be obtained.

The only rejection set forth in the Action is one based on anticipation under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) with reliance on Pappas et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,846,685. This patent relates to a

radiation sensitive composition containing an adduct of a diazonium resin having pendant diazonium groups with a sulfonated acrylic copolymer having pendant sulfonate groups. The diazonium resin is described in greater detail in the passage beginning at column 5, line 8 and can be prepared by the condensation reaction of paraformaldehyde and p-diazodiphenylamine or the condensation of 4, 4'-bis(methoxy methyl)diphenyl ether with 3-methoxy-4-diazodiphenylamine. The Examiner has relied on Examples 1-5 of the patent, each of which describes an adduct which is in part formed from the described diazonium resin.

Applicants respectfully submit that Pappas et al. does not disclose each and every feature set forth in the claims as required for an anticipation rejection. As noted above, the definition of formula (7) does not include diazonium resin, but rather includes relatively low molecular weight compounds of the type illustrated in the aforementioned sections of the present application. Underscoring the distinctive nature of the respective materials is the manner in which the respective materials are used. As explained in the previous response, Pappas et al. states in the passage beginning at column 5, line 51,

> When the solvent soluble adduct of this invention is exposed to actinic radiation, it is rendered insoluble in the developer. Without being bound by any one theory, it is believed that diazonium groups of the exposed adduct decompose and that ionic linkages between the resin and the copolymer are replaced with permanent covalent crosslinks to form an insoluble network structure. In addition to being sensitive to actinic radiation, adducts of this invention may be insolubilized thermally by suitable heat treatment.

In contrast, the lithographic printing plate precursor of the present invention involves a defined hydrophobic high molecular compound which can be converted into hydrophilic by irradiation with actinic rays and/or heating as specifically disclosed in the specification in the paragraph bridging pages 12 and 13. This conversion ability is advantageous and can

facilitate on-machine processing such as set forth on page 169 of the specification. In this respect, it will be noted therefrom that the exposed areas are ultimately removed which is contrary to the formation of the **in**soluble network structure in the exposed areas as disclosed in the foregoing passage of Pappas et al.. Hence, those of ordinary skill in the art will clearly understand that the present invention defines a material which is quite distinct from the material of Pappas et al..

In view of the foregoing discussion and a proper understanding of the present invention and the cited prior art, applicants respectfully submit that claims 5 and 4 are patentable in all respects and therefore request reconsideration and allowance of the present application.

As a final matter, applicants note that an Information Disclosure Statement was filed on February 27, 2004, and applicants request that the Examiner consider the information provided therein and return the acknowledged citation form with the next Official Action.

Should the Examiner wish to discuss any aspect of the present application, he is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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